

INTRODUCTION

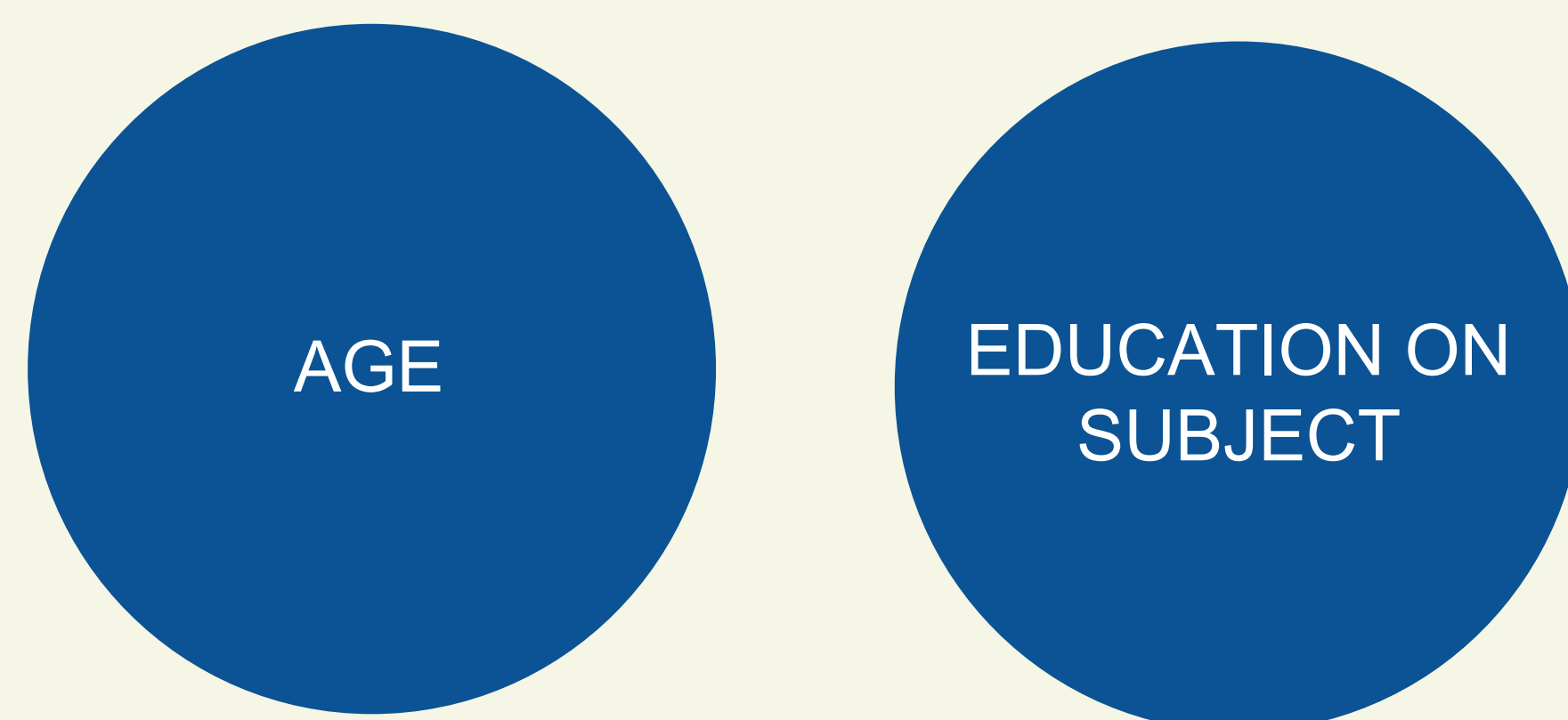
Evaluating why students become more or less inclusive toward their classmates with disabilities

in terms of...

- their age, and
- information they receive about the topic

...and their impact on perceptions of inclusivity.

Topics Under Investigation:



Research indicates three main areas of development for inclusivity:

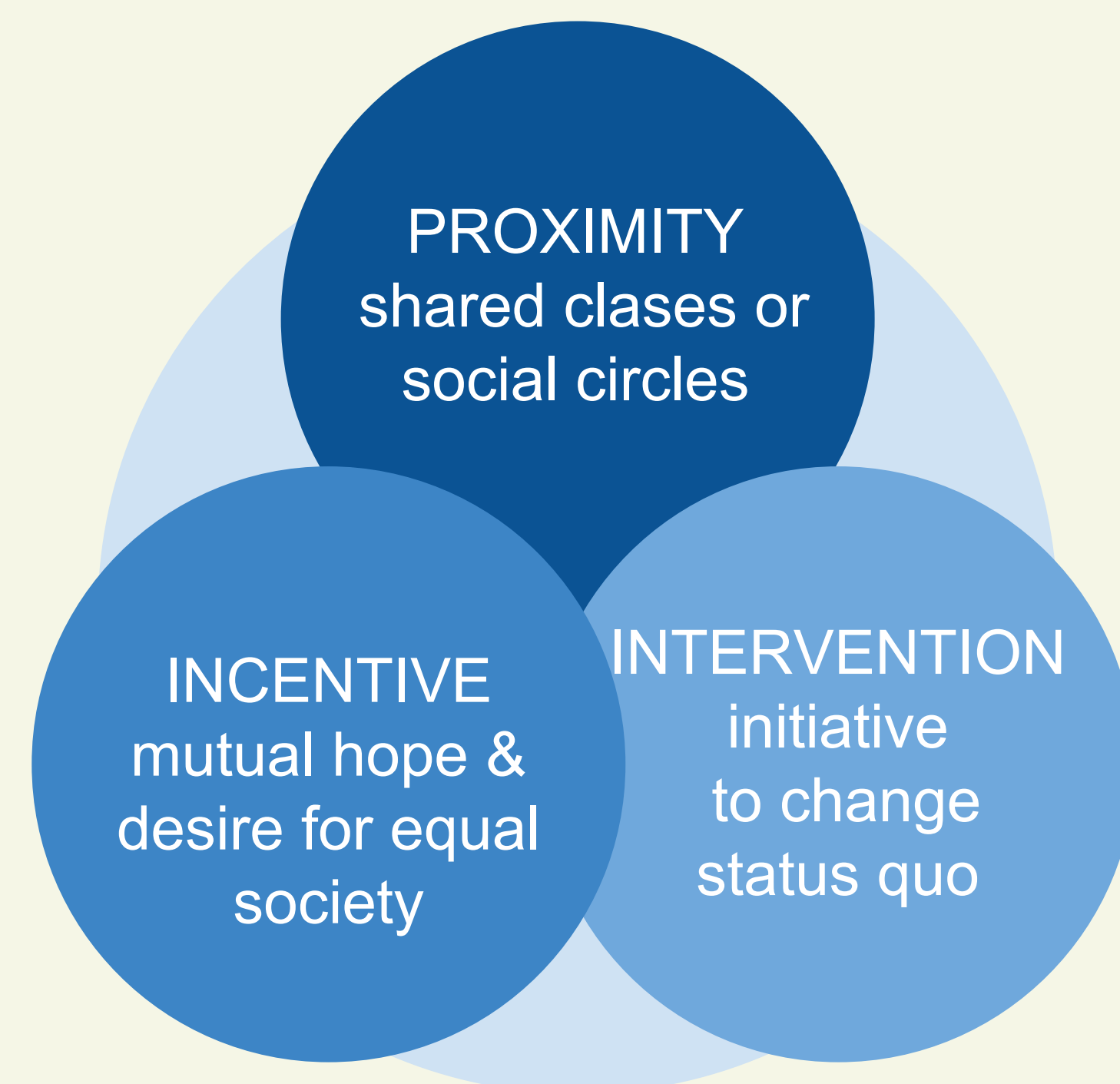


Fig #1: Aspects of socialization that have been studied until now

PROXIMITY

“Personal experience is among the factors that may shape attitudes toward people with disabilities. Research on the topic has shown that the more direct contact a person has, the more positive his or her attitudes are towards people with disabilities” (Wozencroft, Pate & Griffiths, 2015).

INCENTIVE

College students “reported that they would be interested in serving as a mentor and felt that a postsecondary education program would provide opportunities for growth and increase diversity on campus” (Haney & Fisher, 2017).

INTERVENTION

“Children are generally lacking accurate knowledge about disabilities [and noted the] importance of intervening in negative social interactions between children with and without disabilities” (Nowicki & Brown, 2013).

METHODS and DATA COLLECTION

Procedure:

Initial Focus Group

Information Session

Secondary Focus Group (ADDRESSES IMPACTS OF MORE INFORMATION)

Sample Focus Group Questions:

- Is your best friend different from you?
- How can you help your classmates learn better if they are having trouble?
- How do you think your classmates with disabilities are different from you?

DATA and RESULTS

Fig #2: Responses are ordered by age and if the responses were prior (light blue) or following (dark blue) the information session.

	Descriptors about Experiences			Comments on Experiences			Incentives for Inclusivity	
	Positive Things	Different things	Negative things	Fun experiences	Ideas for inclusion	Observations	Internal	External
1st	Nice Kind Caring Respectful	We're pretty different, maybe because she likes dogs a lot Some were born with something and their mind didn't work or something Their brains work differently and they have trouble with learning more because their brain doesn't work so well	Rude Said bad words Punch people It means someone can't do something and it's bad and it's not good		You can say: hi, do you need help You could say: would you like to play with us You can make stuff in your game so they can play, or you can say this person can't do it so you fix the game up so they can do it Let's say they can't do it and it's kind of sad, but then you just have to switch the game	It's something they just can't do It means it's something you can't do, but if it's not a 'disability, disability' then you can just try and see if you can get better at it	Me and my friends just say: yes, you can play with us	It's not nice to not include someone You have to say that if a boy or girl can't do an activity then we have to do something else because we have to include at our school Let's say they can't do it and it's kind of sad, but then you just have to switch the game
3rd	Imagination Athletic Kind/ Kind hearted Nice Care about me Really similar Like the same thing as me	Can't do something Don't understand things Different because we like different food or different games and things	Mean Not very friendly Life different stuff Scary Very different Weird Strange	Play together	I would just do what they're doing everyday I showed him how I did the math problem and he thought that was pretty helpful I would usually help by being kind to them	He would have reactions When they have disabilities nobody really plays with them They don't always know what they're doing	Sometimes I just don't feel like including another friend, or if I'm tired or feel like I don't want to talk much	I think you should just be kind to a person with a disability because they could react in a way you might not like. Sometimes it's difficult because they can't do everything you can do. They can't play many games. They don't have many friends which is why it's important to include them and make them happy. It's difficult to include because there are things they can't do and it's harder to play with them.

ANALYSIS and DISCUSSION

Findings indicate that

-respondents in 1st grade reported diverse responses during the second round of questioning

-respondents in 3rd grade reported significantly less diverse responses as their initial responses.

-the data indicates that the 1st graders had more developed responses in addition to the diversity in thought

It was discovered that

-respondents in 1st grade perceive inclusivity to mean that different students are welcome to join their games and that their games could be adapted to suit other people

-respondents in 3rd grade perceive inclusivity to mean they assist struggling students when help is asked for

-both age groups have limited understanding of disability, and 1st grade respondents expressed more receptiveness to the information session

CONCLUSION

It is important to note that young students have limited knowledge on the subject but begin asserting their observations and developing judgements between 1st and 3rd grade, as indicated by the 1st graders' higher receptiveness to further information.

To remedy the issue of young students misunderstanding disability, it may be beneficial to implement disability awareness education prior to 3rd grade in order to prevent misinformation and solidified judgements.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Angela Dellaporta, Tonya Mota, Lisa Lewis-Cogswell, and Hilary McDaniel for helping make this project possible.

References

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